forces by reducing its numerical strength by about 50,000 and modernising/equipping them with latest sophisticated weapons;

(b) if so, the details of the plan and the cost likely to be incurred thereon; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Army has planned under posting 50,000 personnel in a phased manner by 31 March, 1999. This will not result in any retrenchment or reduction in combat potential. The savings achieved will be utilised for the modernisation programmes of the Army and for improvement in the quality of life of the troops.

Fundamental Rights of Armed Forces Personnel

756. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Armed Forces personnel have to content with large scale abridgement of their fundamental rights granted to citizens of India under various provisions of the Constitution of India;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) how and to what extent such abridgement of their fundamental rights is compensated?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Armed Forces personnel in Army, Navy and Air Force are governed by Army Act 1950, Navy Act 1957 and Air Force Act 1950 duly approved by the Parliament. Article 33 of the Constitution of India empowers Parliament to modify the fundamental rights in their application to the members of the Armed Forces so as to ensure proper discharge of their duties and the maintenance of discipline among them.

Indian accusations against China

757. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the purpose of Government want to serve by hurling accusations against China when the country is in need of maintaining good relations with the neighbouring country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): Government have made no accusations against China but have only expressed India's security concerns. Government is committed to building a friendly, co-operative, good neighbourly, and mutually beneficial relationship with China.

Crash of MIG-21 aircraft at Pathankot

758. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a MIG-21 IAF aircraft recently crashed into the shopping complex in Pathankot district killing some persons;

(b) if so, the details of the inquiry conducted by Government into the MIG-21 crash; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) On 12 May 1998, a MIG-21 IAF aircraft crashed in a locality during take off from Pathankot airfield. In the accident two persons were fatally injured and two were seriously injured.

(b) and (c) A Court of inquiry into the accident has been ordered and is in progress.

Construction of Helipad by China

759. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has constructed a Helipad in Arunachal Pradesh and there are continuous incidents of incursions by Chinese Army personnel as reported in the press;

(b) if so, how many incursions have taken place during the last five years and what steps have been taken to counter them;

(c) whether matters relating to demarcation of actual line of control have been taken up with the visiting Chinese Chief of Army Staff; and

(d) what is the stage of threat perception created by Chinese Army deployed on Indo-China borders and whether this has been reduced as per the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) There are no reports of alleged construction of helipads by